1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

754 cording to Nick: "New people like white man; he don't know." A residual faith in witchcraft may persist among the Nelson Indians. As Old Man somewhat unwillingly stated: "Looks like some people still believe it. I know Nick Lang still believe it." Following the dysentery epidemic of 1944 in the Nelson Indian district, Old Man heard Mary Wiley report: "The people pretty bad yet. They talk about witch." During a discussion of the sporadic cases of dysentery occurring in the summer of 1945 one young man spoke up and said: "Too much war; too much blood. That brings out sickness. Too much people killed."

753 Some of these theories of disease are at least partially empirically demonstrable. How-
757 ever, even where empirical beliefs apply, as for instance in connection with cold and tuberculosis, they do not necessarily influence therapeutic or hygienic measures. Isolation of the patient is not practiced in conjunction with these illnesses. Little attempt is made to prevent wetting or chilling, except in very cold weather, and in fall children often spend entire days in wet mosquitos. Walking long distances in wet brush is avoided whenever possible, but this precaution is generally more a matter of comfort than of preventative medicine.

753 It is worth pointing out that there is a greater tendency to explain illness in empirical terms than to attribute it to supernatural causation. The typical methods of reacting to sickness, however, are to do nothing, use what patent medicines are available, or refer the patient to white medical attention. Although there is a tendency to defend against anxiety and fear by making light of sickness, there can be little question but that it is usually intensely anxiety provoking to the patient. Undoubtedly this fear of illness is related to the inadequate control which the society experiences over disease. It may also be related to the fear of incapacitation, which can be expected to assume serious proportions when an adult is extremely dependent on his own resources to make a living and where mobility is of paramount economic importance.

757 Most of the medical therapy performed by the Indians is with the aid of patent medi-
• 278 cines obtained from stores. A high degree of faith is invested in such preparations and several assorted bottles are often purchased in the fall to be used for what illnesses appear during the winter. The most commonly used patent medicines include cough remedies, liniment, dysentery remedies, castor oil, stomach tonic, liver pills, fruit salts, and Listerine; the latter, however, is largely consumed in lieu of other alcoholic portables. Lozenges for coughs are often purchased and Vicks Vaporub is popular for colds and chest coughs. Aspirin is not commonly bought. Epsom salts are used to "clean the blood" by removing "bad water" from the intestines. River Jos drank a compound of fruit salts daily for this purpose.

757 Indigenous medication is limited to the use of a few plants products, like balsam pitch,
319 balsam bark, raspberry bush, and willow bush, as well as inhalations, enemas, and the ap-
278 plication of heat.

Balsam pitch is highly believed in for its medicinal properties, but is not readily accessible in the river valleys where most of the people's time is spent. In the fall of 1945, while hunting in the Simpson Mountains, Old Man secured some balsam pitch and put a little in his weak eyes. The pain was intense at first but in the morning he found his sight greatly improved. He did not expect the treatment, as no more balsam was immediately available. Application of balsam pitch is also recommended for impetigo and other skin diseases. The bark of the balsam tree boiled in water and drunk is said to be an effective cure for coughs

1: Honigmann E-S (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

and for pain near the heart. A cup or two of the stems of the raspberry plant boiled in water provides a cathartic. For a skin irritation on the back of her knees, Elsie Lang was advised by her grandmother, Mrs. Man, to apply a poultice made of fresh or dried boiled fireweed. Two handfuls of willow buds boiled with a pint of water for about twenty minutes in a discarded food tin (the buds discolor metal when boiled) make a medicine that will cure cold. Doses should be taken at regular intervals. A willow-like plant, known as "moose brush" and growing along the upper reaches of Dease River, is highly regarded for its medicinal efficacy. The stems of the plant are boiled for several hours and the effusion drunk for chest pain and cough. The solution may also be used for washing sore eyes. Stems are kept for reuse, but are discarded after several boilings.

The inhalation of the fumes of dog urine is a popular remedy for cold. A person watches for a place where dogs urinate and collects the soaked wood or brush to use in creating a smudge. People walk back and forth through the fumes, breathing them. This treatment is also thought to be effective in preventing cold. When Louis Man's baby showed a swollen neck, the father suggested an "old fashioned" remedy. A hot rock, heated in the oven and wrapped in a towel, was applied to the sore area. Exercise is sometimes recommended for therapy. Following a long period of illness from cough and cold, Old Man set out on a five mile walk, planning to fish upon arrival at his destination. "I figger if my blood work, I'm all right."

CONCLUSIONS

It is not likely that any analysis of Kaska ideational culture made with reference to the criteria of adaptive and adjustive efficiency will reward us with greater insight than we have already derived. As a matter of fact, although many of the ideas which we have just discussed may potentially be of great utility in making a living, their value depends upon their behavioral application; to discuss the manner in which the Kaska apply their empirical knowledge, for example, would require repetition of much that we have already said concerning the Indians' style of life.

Therefore, in concluding the description of Kaska culture, we shall be content with briefly sketching the structural relationship of a few aspects of ideational to technical and social behaviors. The ideal virtues of men and women, for example, are clarified when the industriousness and skill ideally expected of [redacted] are considered alongside the nature of the male's economic routines and their significance for survival. The Indians are aware of the necessity for hard work in the business of getting a living but do not practice as much as they believe. The economic importance of a woman's industriousness is also revealed in the ethical standards, indicating how important feminine labor is seen to be in conjunction with the man's economic role. Despite men's statements that they can live independently, both sexes are clearly expected to supplement one another, as they actually do. From another point of view, the relative simplicity and unelaboration of ideational material may itself be regarded as functionally related to the primacy of the food quest in the life of the society. Intensive speculation, whether religious or empirical, requires sufficient leisure for at least part of a society plus an intellectual tradition on which to build. Both these conditions are lacking for the people of the Cassiar. Even the sexual life is influenced by the economic pat-

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

ing. She used to tell me stories about old fashioned people going to war against each other. I heard her tell of a man who beat his wife when she made a little hole in meat that she was slicing for drying. Nowadays people aren't so mean. Metha told me about the elephant that ate men and about the man-eating snake. There was a big eagle too that used to snatch people. That's what she told me. She said the devil made those animals. There used to be a jackfish that ate men, and once upon a time the otter were people who killed Indians. In the beginning the grizzly bear walked around and spoke just like the Indians. The wolverine, fox, crow, and all the other animals were people too. Metha used to scare me when she told me those stories. Then she told me about high water coming. All the animals, including the elephant, went up to a high mountain. The people made a raft and sailed up to a big hill and stayed there until the water went down. After hearing some of those stories, we kids used to stay close to camp. We were afraid that if we walked around the bad animals would smell us, follow us, and catch us.

When I got older, I used to play on a raft and push it down a little nearby slough. I made a spruce bark canoe, too, and sewed it together. We used to play store, piling up a lot of logs for the trading post and make believe we had eggs, oranges, and rice. When somebody came along, I'd say: "You want to buy stuff?" I sold him kets and he'd give a skin. All the kids played that game. In winter I made a little toboggan and loaded it with stones. All the kids used to make candles out of moose fat and a piece of string. Now children don't do that anymore. If I found a piece of tin, I filed it down to make a knife. After tying a handle to the blade, I tried to cut meat with it. If the meat wasn't too tough, it worked; but most of the time the knife would bend. With a jaw axe I made a little teepee. Sometimes the kids made camp with a campfire. We boiled meat and ate it. Then somebody would decide to move camp. We'd now up a bag and put everything in it and go someplace else.

After playing, I used to get hungry and look for something to eat. If there was any boiled meat, I'd eat it; but I was too young to know how to cook. Sometimes I'd broil a snack.

Once, when I was making an arrow, a big nail went right through my hand. Jesus! I pushed it back. It hurt just like fire. I could feel my heart getting weak. As a child my heart and lungs were always sore. I felt poor all the time. I looked bad, and my eyes got weak. Rotten stuff came out of my mouth. Not long ago I started to feel better. I boiled up balsam and made medicine. That helped me. Now I feel fine. When I started to use an ax, I cut the top of my foot. I wasn't smart enough yet to know how to use an ax. The blood poured out of the cut. Mama and I patched it up so that no dirt would get in. Another time I cut my hand with a knife that somebody had sharped to use in working moosehide. When I handed it to the woman, I cut my hand.

Pretty soon I heard about the other women. It used to be that the otter was a girl, and if a man put his penis in her vagina, she would chew it. They say there's a weasel in the vagina. When he chews the penis, the man dies. Lots of men died that way. The spirit in women too; sometimes she does the same thing to a man who tries to sleep with her.

When I had to go into the bush alone I was scared. I looked around before I moved. People told me to watch out for the grizzly bear. If the grizzly caught a man, they said, he would tear him to pieces. The first game I ever got was a caribou. I could hardly skin him; I was too weak to turn him over. It took me about six hours to finish the job. When I came

After childbirth the mother was
fed soft food for several days and given plenty of water 262 846
to drink. Many also drank copiously of medicines of at
least two kinds, viz., a decoction of the sap wood of [278]
spruce, and a decoction of the wood of a black berry.
Mothers were also fed on soups of meat and salmon or
drank the nourishing brews obtained from the boiling of
the staple foods. It is said this had the effect of [827]
improving and increasing the milk supply and was there-
fore beneficial for the baby. When the mother felt 846
strong and well enough she returned to the living lodge.
No payments were made to midwives. Some informants say [759]
that probably very long ago some midwives may have
received pay but they are not sure of this. Some
wealthy men at the birth of their children gave a feast
to the neighbours and distributed skins and leather,
etc., among them as presents. It seems this ceremony
generally took place when a man's wife returned with
her baby from the confinement lodge, but some gave it
soon after the birth was announced.

There was a custom if the infant was a male
for the father to repair to the confinement lodge
shortly after the afterbirth had come. He took with
him a miniature bow and arrows, the latter about five
inches long. These he had made as soon as he had
learned his child was a boy.

Holding them in the infant's hands, he made

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Frances Lake
Upper Liard
Dease River

755 [783] [754] [784]

pointed out that in illness all the wind did not leave the body—this would have caused death. To cure, a shaman blew some of his wind into the patient's body. No recollection of confession was admitted but Field's anecdote above suggests that practice. Sorcery sometimes resulted in death, or was believed to have that power. The avoidance on making snowshoes before snow lay on the ground obtained among the Frances Lake people as it did in the upper Liard Valley.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY

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It appears that, compared to the magical rites discussed above, relatively less dogmatic attitudes governed the methods of therapy to be described in this section. Some of the techniques to be discussed may even have been supported by an awareness of their empirically verifiable relationship to the desired end.

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Upper Liard Kaska. Charcoal rubbed under the eyes prevented snow blindness. To cure the affliction the sore eyes were bathed in infusions of alder or tamarack bark. No help for snow blindness came from the application of spruce gum nor was bleeding ever used for this purpose. Spruce gum helped to treat blisters, while the young flowers of the fireweed boiled in water provided a drink that relieved muscular pains. An unidentified white root (negata), with an odor as penetrating as horse-radish, growing in mountainous country cleared up head congestion resulting from colds. After grinding it and mixing it with grease, a sufferer breathed the root through each nostril in turn. Sweat baths afforded protection from colds. Both sexes took such baths regularly from about the age of ten. Men preceded women in the sweat lodge. Bathing in the sulphurous hot springs of the Cassiar possessed no therapeutic value.[42]

[515]

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Dease River Kaska. People used balsam gum to staunch the flow of blood from a cut and then bound the wound with dry grass. The same substance applied to the inner corners of each eye relieved snow blindness without bandaging. Snow blindness was caused by small "white bugs" springing from the snow into the victim's eyes. Snow also harbored small black insects (ta'uctetla') that had no injurious effects on human beings.[43] A tourniquet prevented fatal bleeding in case of a severed artery. Animal grease or brains relieved the pain of burns. Broken bones were set by shamans, the limb being stretched and tightly bound with a layer of grass wrapped around with tanned-skin line. The casing remained in place for several months or until the break healed. Snowshoe "sickness," manifested by aching in the toes and insteps, could be relieved overnight by wrapping and binding the feet with grass. To thaw frozen parts of the body people gently rubbed snow on the affected part. Also the frozen organ might be immersed in extremely cold water. Remedies for toothache were denied. Emetics are probable but their nature could not be recalled precisely. To treat colds, urine in a vessel was heated with a hot pole. The patient then crouched over the liquid, his head covered with a skin, and inhaled the fumes. Presumably human urine is indicated.

[42] For some contemporary remedies, a few of which, like the inhalation of urine fumes, probably have roots in the aboriginal period, see Honigmann, *Culture and Ethos of Kaska Society* (1949), 247.

[43] "Small black worms" were thought by the Fort Nelson Slave to cause snow blindness. Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 132.